



NEWS

from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

March 13, 1997

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**UNITED STATES GIVES HELPING HAND TO INTERNATIONAL RHINO-TIGER
CONSERVATION PROJECTS WITH FIRST-EVER GRANTS UNDER THE
RHINOCEROS AND TIGER CONSERVATION ACT**

New on-the-ground help for rhinos and tigers, among the world's most critically endangered animals, was announced today by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with the first round of grants awarded under the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994. A total of 14 projects in Africa and Asia will receive nearly \$251,000 from 1996 and 1997 appropriated funds. The funds must be matched by private donations.

"We need quick-strike capability to fend off the looming extinction of rhinos and tigers," said Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. "Although modest, the grant money will go directly where it is most needed--to the local groups fighting on the front lines of this daunting conservation challenge."

At latest count, there were fewer than 10,000 rhinos and approximately 5,000 tigers left in the wild worldwide. Although all populations of both species are protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), an international conservation agreement, and in this country by the Endangered Species Act, the lucrative illegal trade in their parts and products continues.

African rhinoceros populations and Asian rhinoceros and tiger populations are increasingly threatened by human predation. Poorly equipped, ill-trained, and under-funded local law enforcement officers are no match against well-financed and -outfitted poachers. Also, as human populations grow, people and wildlife compete for space. Encroachment and development are creating enormous pressure on wild rhinos and tigers. Recognizing that the United States could offer much-needed financial support to the conservation programs of nations whose activities impact rhinos and tigers, Congress passed the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994. The act provides money to fund projects that will enhance sustainable development programs to ensure effective long-term rhino and tiger conservation. Congress has authorized funding for the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act through the year 2000. Congress appropriated \$200,000 for these projects in FY 1996 and \$400,000 in FY 1997.

"The grants awarded today are extremely cost-effective and practical. This money will buy boots, sweaters, raincoats, and equipment for conservation officers and will fund education projects designed to give local people the tools they need to save these magnificent creatures now and in the years to come," said Babbitt.

Highlights of the initial projects funded through this program include:

AFRICAN RHINOCEROS PROJECTS

KENYA:

Proposal For Assistance With The Purchase Of Equipment And Supplies To Support The Friends Of Conservation Naikarra/Laleta Community Rhino Scout Program For Survival Of The Black Rhino Population \$5,690. Submitted by Friends of Conservation.

Rhino Security Appeal \$4,000. Submitted by Lewa Wildlife Conservancy for Basic Field Ranger's Training in South Africa. For one game guard from each of two community wildlife programs to participate in a 6-week training program in South Africa.

SOUTH AFRICA:

Training Programme For Game Scouts Involved In Rhino Population Monitoring (Revision and production of a new edition) \$5,105. Submitted by African Rhino Specialist Group.

ZAIRE:

Aerial Monitoring Of The Northern White Rhinoceros In Garamba National Park \$19,680. Submitted by WWF-East Africa Regional Programme Office.

ASIAN RHINOCEROS PROJECTS

INDIA:

Conservation Of The Great Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros in North East India \$34,060. Submitted by The Rhino Foundation For Nature In North East India for forest guard equipment.

Conservation Of The Great Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros In North East India \$23,736. Submitted by The Rhino Foundation For Nature In North East India to strengthen the anti-poaching system in Assam by providing up-to-date wireless communications networks for rhino-protected areas.

INDONESIA:

Colloquium On Conservation Action And Coordination For Javan Rhino In Ujung Kulon National Park \$5,550. Submitted by IUCN/SSC Asian Rhino Specialist Group and International Rhino Foundation to assemble the parties who are actually or proposing to be active in Javan rhino conservation, to discuss relative needs and interests, propose actions, establish priorities, identify those who would implement actions, and develop a working plan and time table.

Establishment Of Sumatran Rhino Protection Units (RPUs) For Way Kambas National Park, Sumatra \$32,400. Submitted by Asian Rhino Specialist Group to establish and operate three anti-poaching units for one year.

Establishment Of Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary In Way Kambas National Park \$24,000. Submitted by Indonesia Center for Reproduction of Endangered Wildlife, Taman Safari Indonesia, and International Rhino Foundation for electrical components needed to establish a managed breeding center in natural habitat at Way Kambas.

TIGER PROJECTS

INDIA:

Investigation Into Poaching And Illegal Trade Of Wild Tigers In India \$30,900. Submitted by Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI). WPSI's network of informers will be reactivated and expanded, and information and assistance will be given to enforcement authorities on seizure of tiger parts in illegal trade and the arrest and prosecution of offenders.

INDONESIA:

Tiger Community Education Program At Way Kambas National Park \$6,200. Submitted by Sumatran Tiger Project.

NEPAL:

Workshop On Tiger Field Assessment \$5,000. Submitted by University of Minnesota. This workshop will bring together experts from all range states who are involved in censusing tiger distribution or numbers to discuss and critique current and past methodologies; to consult with census specialists well-versed in the problems of counting large, secretive mammals; and to derive a set of criteria to be used when implementing census techniques.

PROJECTS BENEFITTING BOTH ASIAN RHINOCEROSSES AND TIGERS

INDIA:

Conservation Education And Awareness Training Programme For The Protection And Preservation Of The Tiger And Rhinoceros \$14,420. Submitted by The Green's Movement for conservation education activities and anti-poacher training.

INDONESIA:

Adopt-A-Warden \$40,000. Submitted by Minnesota Conservation Officers Association to equip and train the park personnel of Ujung Kulon and Way Kambas national parks so they can effectively deter poaching and protect the natural habitat of rhinos in Ujung Kulon and rhinos and tigers in Way Kambas.

There is funding available for additional projects this year.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency with responsibility for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages 509 national wildlife refuges covering 92 million acres, as well as 68 national fish hatcheries.

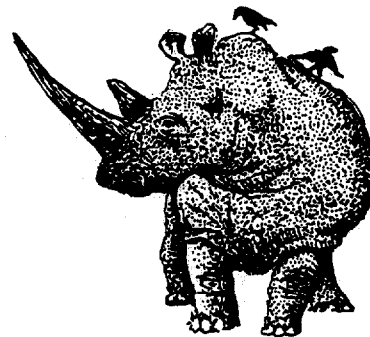
The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, stocks recreational fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that funnels Federal excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies. This program is a cornerstone of the Nation's wildlife management efforts, funding fish and wildlife restoration, boating access, hunter education, shooting ranges, and related projects across America.

Additional information about rhinoceroses can be found at http://www.fws.gov/~r9extaff/biologues/bio_rhin.html on the Service's home page. Information about tigers can be found at http://www.fws.gov/~r9extaff/biologues/bio_tige.html on the home page.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

This Species is Protected Under the Endangered Species Act of 1973

RHINOCEROS

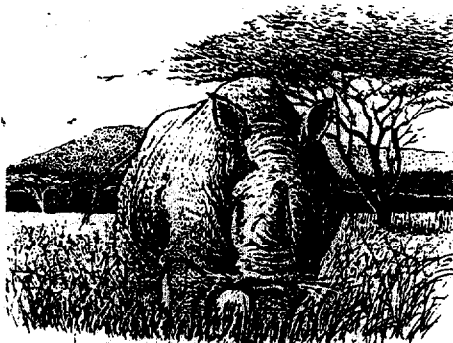


Prehistoric rhinoceroses, some larger than elephants, some the size of wolves, were found on every continent except South America and Australia. Today, there are five species of rhino; two African species and three Asian. The African species are the white, or square-lipped; and the black rhinos. Both species have two horns. Of the Asian species, the Indian and the Javan each have a single horn, while the Sumatran rhino has two.

The word rhinoceros means "horn-nosed," and rhinos use their horns for several purposes. They use them to shovel the ground for mineral salt; to fight over territory, a female, or during courtship; and to defend themselves and their young against lions, tigers, and hyenas.

Like buffalos and elephants, rhinos are very near-sighted. They can only see clearly up to about 30 feet away. The lateral placement of their eyes causes them to turn their heads from side to side to see straight ahead.

Rhinos' extremely acute senses of hearing and smell compensate for their poor eyesight. Rhinos are able to pinpoint the origin of a sound and charge at it. And they use their highly devel-



Rhinos are *herbivores*, meaning they eat only plants. The white rhino eats primarily grasses, for which its square-shaped lip is ideally suited.

oped sense of smell to identify other rhinos, keep track of their young, and identify predators.

In addition, "tick birds," such as egrets, oxpeckers, and mynas, which feed on ticks and other insects and parasites plaguing the rhino's skin, serve as an early warning system, alerting the rhino to danger when they are startled.

Rhinos are *herbivores*, meaning they eat only plants. But each rhino species prefers something different. The white rhino eats primarily grasses, for which its square-shaped lip is ideally suited. Other rhinos prefer to browse on bushes or trees. They have a pointed prehensile

upper lip—that is, their lip can actually grasp branches to help pull and break them. The Javan and Sumatran rhinos prefer leaves in the upper-most parts of trees. They will knock down trees to reach the upper branches, leaving the lower limbs uneaten.

Male and female rhinos both establish territories. Males, or *bulls*, mark and defend their territories viciously. Recent observations indicate females may fight over their territories as well. Bulls competing for a female try to intimidate each other by charging one another. Males and females often fight during courtship, too. Some of the fighting may turn violent and bloody from wounds inflicted with the horns. Once mating is over, males and females go their separate ways again.

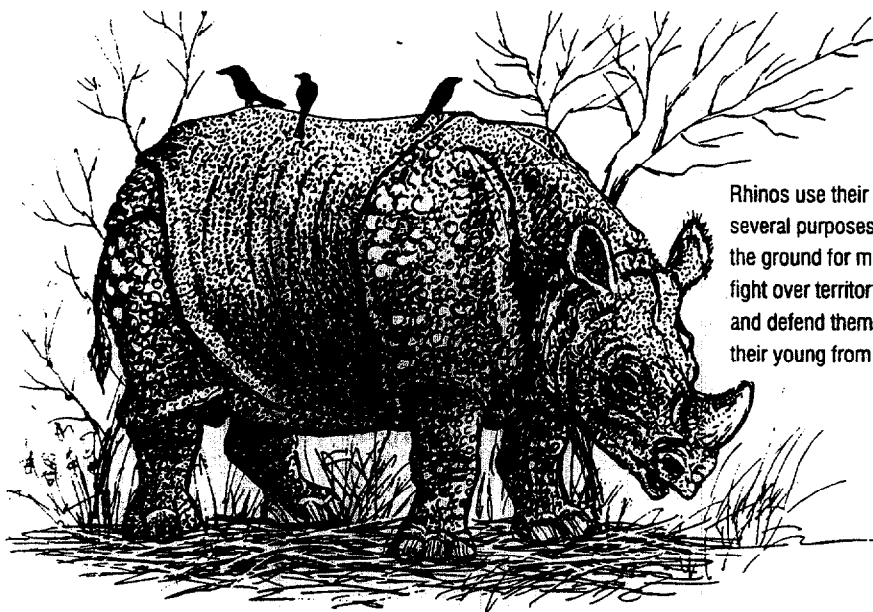
Fourteen to eighteen months later, a calf is born. Calves are on their feet within hours of birth. And, although they nurse for a year, they begin eating vegetation in about a week.

Calves remain close to their mother until they are about 3 years old. At this time, another calf may have been born and the mother chases off her older offspring.

In captivity, rhinos may live for up to 40 years, but biologists estimate they live about 30 to 35 years in the wild. For the most part, rhinos are solitary animals. But white rhinos are known to form groups of as many as 18 animals and Indian rhinos sometimes form small groups, too.

Some people might be surprised when they see a rhinoceros because it might be any color from gray to red. The coloring comes from the mud the rhino wallows in each day. Mud baths are essential for the good health of all rhinos because they provide relief from biting insects, keep their skin in good condition, and help keep them cool.

The only land animal larger than the rhino is the elephant. The future of

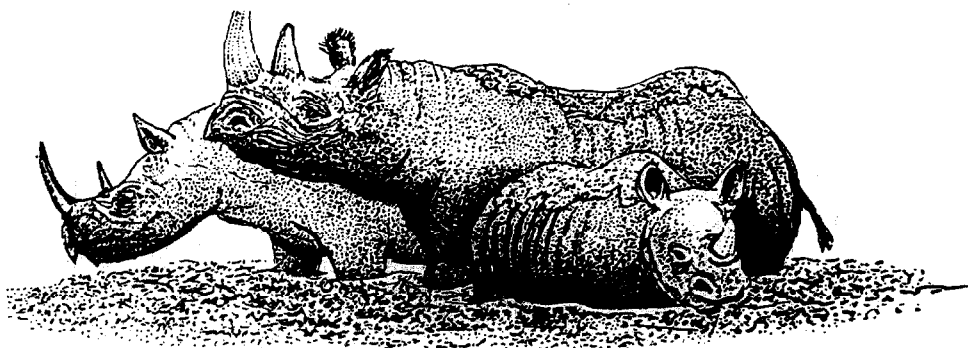


Rhinos use their horns for several purposes: to shovel the ground for mineral salt, fight over territory or females, and defend themselves or their young from predators.

these giants is guarded as their habitat continues to be lost to agriculture and development, and a market for medicines made of rhino horn encourages poaching, or illegal killing.

In India, rhino grazing grounds have been converted to rice paddies to feed an ever-growing population. There the rhino is considered a pest as it raids rice paddies and eats crops. In Java, the rhino has suffered from lumber demands that have led to deforestation of its habitat.

Poaching poses an even greater threat to rhino survival. For centuries, Asians have believed that powdered rhino horn could cure everything from fevers and nose bleeds to measles, diphtheria, and food poisoning. Many also believe powdered rhino horn helps retain the vigor of youth and contributes to sexual stamina. And, in the Middle East, daggers made with rhino horn handles are a status symbol.



Wallowing in mud is an important activity for rhinos, since it gives them relief from biting insects, keeps their skin in good condition, and keeps them cool during times of intense heat.

Some wildlife agencies in Africa have tried programs to saw off the horns of rhinos in an attempt to eliminate the poachers' incentive to kill them. Unfortunately, since 1983, at least 94 de-horned rhinos have been killed by poachers.

The rhino is protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna

and Flora (CITES), an agreement among more than 120 nations to eliminate illegal trade in animals and plants and their parts and associated products. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the federal agency responsible for the U.S. government's compliance with the CITES treaty.

Currently, some countries are threatening to impose trade sanctions against Yemen, South Korea, China, and Taiwan for allegedly violating the CITES agreement. The United States imposed wildlife trade sanctions on Taiwan in 1994 for that country's illegal trade in rhino as well as tiger parts and products—the first time the U.S. government has taken such action on another country to penalize illegal trade in critically endangered wildlife.

In addition, all five rhinoceros species are listed as endangered species under the Endangered Species Act, prohibiting rhino parts and products from being imported into the U.S. except under certain conditions.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also supports international rhino conservation efforts through funding and technical assistance that includes resource management, research, and educational programs.

White or Square-lipped rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum*

There are two subspecies of the white rhino—the northern white rhino, which is nearly extinct, and the southern white rhino, which is the most common of all rhinos. The white rhino is actually gray. Its name probably stems from the mistranslation of the Dutch word for “wide” describing its upper lip. It lives on the open plains of Africa. The largest of the rhinos, it stands more than 6 feet tall and weighs 6,000 to 8,000 pounds. It also has the longest horn, averaging 18 inches to 4 feet.

Black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis*

The black rhino also lives in Africa, but in a variety of habitats from the dense rainforests to the dry scrublands. Once numerous in eastern and southern Africa, it is now only found in national parks and game reserves. The black rhino stands more than 5½ feet tall and weighs up to 4,000 pounds. Its front horn averages 18 inches to 4 feet.

Indian rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*

The Indian rhino weighs the same as the black rhino—about 4,000 pounds—but stands about 6 feet tall.

This rhino was once found throughout most of India, particularly in lush river valleys. Today, it survives only on eight reserves in India and Nepal. Living in swampy areas, it eats marsh grasses and aquatic plants.

Sumatran rhinoceros

Dicerorhinus sumatrensis

The Sumatran rhino is the only Asian rhino species with two horns and the only rhino with hair on its body. The front horn averages 15 to 20 inches and the second may be hardly noticeable. It stands about 4½ feet tall and weighs 750 to 2,000 pounds. There are a few Sumatran rhinos left in Burma, Malaysia, Thailand, and Sumatra. They live in dense forests and feed on plants at the forest edges and in mountain clearings.

Javan rhinoceros *Rhinoceros sondaicus*

Like the Sumatran, the Javan rhino also lives in dense forests, feeding at forest edges and mountain clearings on bamboo, fruit, and other plants. There are fewer than 100 Javan rhinos on a game reserve in western Java, and many believe they are extinct in the wild. Javan rhinos weigh up to 3,000 pounds and measure 4½ to 5½ feet tall.

BIOLOGUE SERIES

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1995



ENDANGERED SPECIES

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TIGER

Panthera tigris



There are several different types of tigers, or *subspecies*, and their names reflect where they live geographically. Pressures from illegal killing, or *poaching*, and habitat loss have already driven three tiger subspecies to extinction (the Bali, Javan, and Caspian subspecies) while the remainder are threatened with the same fate. Today, tiger subspecies include the Indian or Bengal, Indo-Chinese, South Chinese, Sumatran, and Siberian tigers.

Tigers occupy habitats as diverse as the coniferous, mixed deciduous forests of the Russian Far East to the tropical rainforests, grasslands, and marshes of India and Indonesia. In the past,

they were also found around the Caspian Sea in Turkey and Iran and on the islands of Bali and Java in Indonesia.

Tigers belong to the cat family, and are the biggest of the big cats, a group which includes lions, jaguars, and leopards.

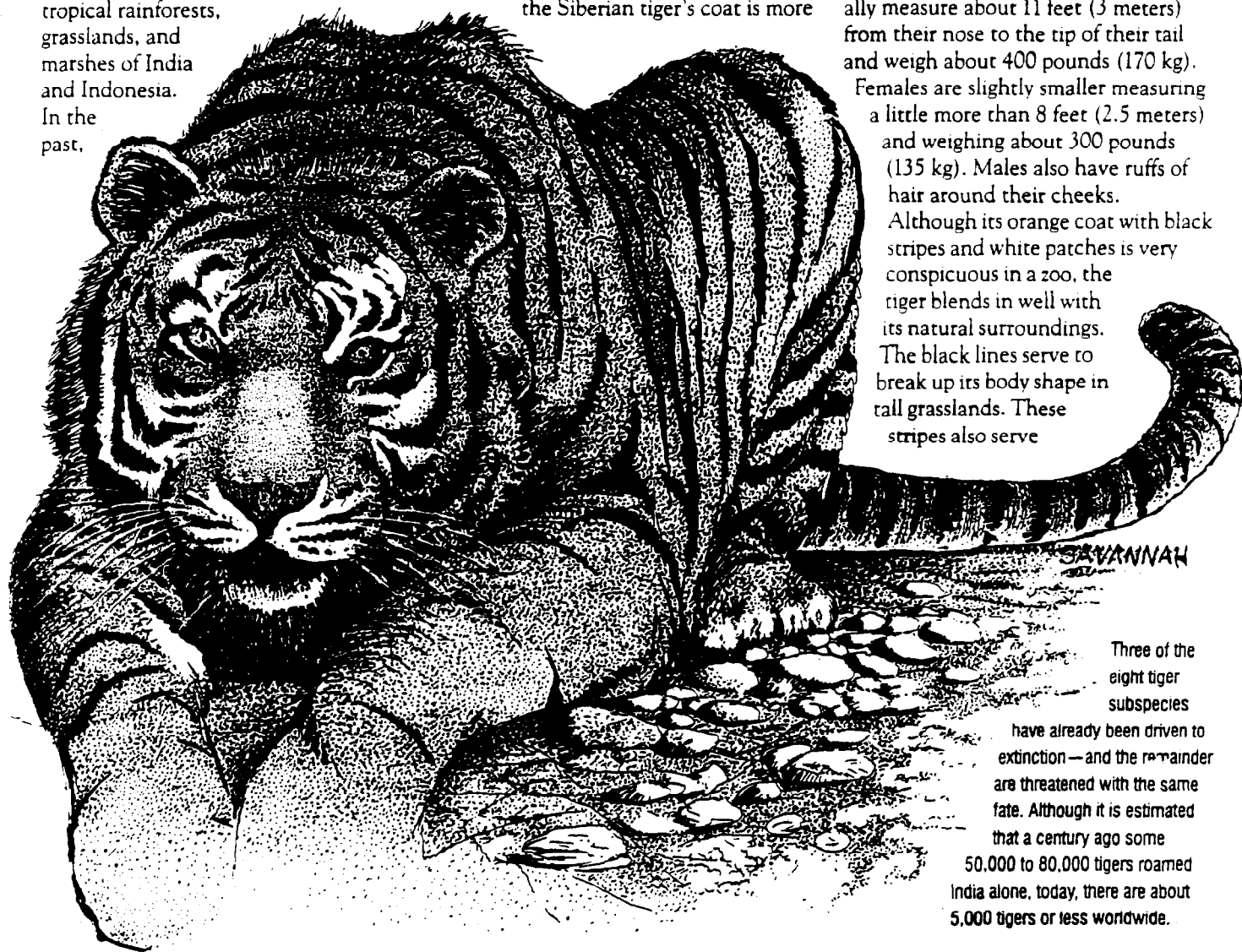
The Siberian tiger is the largest of all of the tiger subspecies. Its size and extra thick, long coat help it survive temperatures as low as -49 degrees F. Also, the Siberian tiger's coat is more

yellow than its tropical relatives, which are brighter in color with shorter and thinner hair. The Bali tiger was the smallest of all the tigers; today, the Sumatran tiger is the smallest of the living subspecies.

Although there is some variation in size among the subspecies, males generally measure about 11 feet (3 meters) from their nose to the tip of their tail and weigh about 400 pounds (170 kg).

Females are slightly smaller measuring a little more than 8 feet (2.5 meters) and weighing about 300 pounds (135 kg). Males also have ruffs of hair around their cheeks.

Although its orange coat with black stripes and white patches is very conspicuous in a zoo, the tiger blends in well with its natural surroundings. The black lines serve to break up its body shape in tall grasslands. These stripes also serve



Three of the eight tiger subspecies

have already been driven to extinction — and the remainder are threatened with the same fate. Although it is estimated that a century ago some 50,000 to 80,000 tigers roamed India alone, today, there are about 5,000 tigers or less worldwide.

as identifying markers because, just like human fingerprints, no two tigers have the same pattern of stripes.

Tigers are *carnivores*, or meat-eaters. They prefer deer, antelopes, and wild pigs, but they will eat whatever they can catch. This might be animals as small as frogs, turtles, fish, or birds, or animals as large as water buffalo, elk, rhinoceros, or elephant calves. Tigers generally avoid contact with humans.

Tigers are well-equipped for hunting. Their keen eyesight picks up even the slightest movement. The tiger's large, cup-shaped ears focus sounds making its hearing very sensitive. A tiger's long, stiff whiskers are used as feelers to help it maneuver through twigs and branches in the dark. The tiger's sense of smell is also excellent.

Like housecats, tigers have retractable claws. They can pull their claws into a protective sheath to prevent them from becoming worn down while walking on rocks or hard ground, keeping them very sharp.

Tigers are primarily *nocturnal*, meaning they hunt at night. But they may continue to hunt during the day if they are not successful. They may travel 10 to 20 miles in a single night searching for a meal.

Tigers rely on surprise and great strength to overcome their prey. They may stalk their prey, or lie in ambush at a watering hole or a well-used path. Tigers can run very fast, but only for brief distances (about 80 feet). If an animal eludes them, they seldom continue to chase it.

If they catch their prey, tigers are very effective at killing it, but they fail to catch their targets many more times than they succeed; a tiger might only succeed in catching a meal once in 15 or 20 attempts.

Tigers can eat as much as 50 to 70 pounds at one meal. Many times, though, they eat much less and may go a week without any food at all.

A male tiger's territory might encompass up to 25 square miles, while a female's range is about 8 to 10 square miles. A male tiger is willing to share its territory with females, but he will not tolerate another male. Tigers mark their territory by scratching trees, scraping the ground, and spraying trees, rocks, and bushes with urine.

Tigers may live up to 15 years in the wild. Most of this time is spent alone, coming together only to mate. The mating period lasts only a few days, then male and female go their separate ways once again.

About 3 to 3½ months after mating, a litter averaging 2 to 3 cubs is born. About the size of a housecat, the cubs are blind and helpless. It will be 2 weeks before their eyes open, and they will be 3 months old before they start eating meat.

At first, the mother brings food back to the den. After about 2½ months, the cubs will accompany her to learn how to hunt. Young cubs follow their mother through tall grass, keeping sight of the back of her ears, which are easily identified by the black coloring with a large white spot.

After 1½ years of learning to survive, the young can effectively hunt on their own, but often, due to their lack of experience, the young may be hurt or even killed by the antlers or hooves of prey. At this time, they leave their mother's territory to establish their own, and are ready to begin breeding and raising their own families.

Some estimates indicate that a century ago, some 50,000 to 80,000 tigers roamed India alone. Today, there are about 5,000 tigers or less worldwide. And these numbers continue to decline.

Until it was banned, trophy hunting and a market for tiger rugs and coats threatened the tiger's survival. Today, habitat destruction, population growth, and an insatiable demand for tiger parts may be too much for the remaining tigers to survive.

In many Asian cultures, tiger parts are thought to cure diseases such as rheumatism, convulsions, typhoid fever, and dysentery. Tiger bone used in these traditional medicines sells for as much as \$75 to \$115 per pound—as much as some villagers make in a year. In addition, tiger genitalia is considered to be an aphrodisiac, a substance thought to contribute to sexual stamina. All of these factors cause widespread poaching of tigers.

In Russia, logging threatens the Siberian tiger's already shrinking habitat. Poaching has greatly increased since the borders between Russia, China, and North Korea opened, providing easy

access to the black markets there and in Taiwan.

In 1972, India led the world in efforts to save the tiger by setting aside a number of areas as tiger reserves complete with patrolling guards. But poaching continues due to widespread corruption and a lack of alternative incomes for village populations that continue to grow.

The tiger is protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an agreement among more than 120 nations to eliminate illegal trade in animals and plants, such as wild tigers, and their parts and associated products. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the federal agency responsible for the U.S. government's compliance with the CITES treaty.

The U.S. government imposed wildlife trade sanctions on Taiwan in 1994 for that country's illegal trade in tiger as well as rhinoceros parts and products—the first time the U.S. government has taken such action on another country to penalize illegal trade in critically endangered wildlife.

In addition, all tiger species are listed as endangered species under the Endangered Species Act, prohibiting tiger parts and products from being imported into the U.S. except under certain conditions.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also supports conservation efforts in other countries, such as India, through funding and technical assistance that includes resource management, research, and education.

Even in areas where the tiger is now extinct, it lives on in myths, legends, and rituals. Tigers may never be as numerous as they were a century ago, but perhaps we can learn to revere and protect them before it is too late.

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